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DEPARTMENT OF HOSPITAL AND TRAINING SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

IN CHARGE OF

ALICE SHEPARD GILMAN, R.N.

SHALL WE ALLOW TIME CREDIT TO GRADUATES FROM UNREGISTERED SCHOOLS?

A doubt has arisen in the minds of the graduates from unregistered schools of nursing regarding the possibility of time being allowed them in the registered school in cases where they desire to qualify for the degree of R.N., and so must enter training schools which are under state supervision.

There is no doubt in the minds of the nurses who are conversant with the state laws in relation to nursing that such allowances of time are not only detrimental, but disastrous to progress and the maintenance of decent standards. For years we have been endeavoring to inhibit the sources of a supply which is dangerous to the health of the community by placing under state supervision all institutions engaged in the training of the nurse and demanding that an approved outline of instruction be carried out under proper supervision.

If we let down the bars to the extent of accepting the graduates of unregistered schools and, by allowing time, admit their acceptability, registration becomes nothing more nor less than a useless appendage which denotes no professional superiority of scientific knowledge or training. Any school which is competent to graduate nurses should be eligible for registration as an accredited or registered school; that is to say, if a hospital cares only for definite groups of patients such as cases in Obstetrics, Surgery, or Pediatrics, and has no affiliation it may, provided it complies with the requirements of the Regents or Board of Examiners, become an accredited school and its graduates pass on to the registered school, credit being allowed them for their previous work. But to expect a school which is maintaining a high standard of instruction to accept graduates from a hospital which in no way qualifies for professional recognition, upon an equal basis, is not consistent and if there are superintendents of registered schools who are giving credit to graduates from these institutions, let them think seriously of the ultimate result. We know nothing of such schools—the type of instruction which has been given, the supervision in the wards, or the administration, except that information which is verbally transmitted to us. Their records are incomplete and inaccurate, as a rule, making it impossible to ascertain individual proficiency and we have passed the stage where the

trial and error method occupies first place and lean toward proper guidance in developing our talents and hereditary gifts.

No reputable profession would grant credit of time on any such basis. It is absurd to expect women coming from these schools, which because of inadequate facilities or low standards cannot qualify for credit or registration, to go out, after six months or a year of post-graduate work, a well trained, competent person, eligible for the degree of R.N. In the first place you can't build any sort of a structure without some foundation and if you attempt to do so the first good wind that comes along topples it over. How, then, is it consistent to expect to give a post-graduate course of instruction when the preliminary work has been inadequate or lacking and get the legitimate result. In the second place it is not fair to the patient who comes to the hospital with some degree of confidence regarding your ability to care for him. We have no business to accept persons upon whom it is necessary to put responsibility, without knowing what equipment they possess to fulfill this responsibility.

Having received some correspondence which has led to the writing of this article and to the assertion of the hope that superintendents of schools of nursing are not making a practice of accepting these graduates, I am led to believe that it is a problem to which we must give attention and increase our efforts for better laws for controlling the output in the nursing profession, thus protecting the public health and upholding the responsibility put upon us by our predecessors in maintaining professional standards. The real solution of the problem is the dissolution of the unregistered school, and this can only be done effectively through the education of the public. A very large number of the young women who go into these schools have little idea of nursing standards. They wish to be nurses and the only problem which presents itself is finding a place of study.

Through publicity it is possible to present in a convincing manner what the registered schools of nursing are, their advantages over the inferior schools, the need of a scientific training and the ultimate results to the community and to the individual. Proper laws for the control of these conditions can only come about through education of the public to the real need for better schools and to the obvious harm done by half-trained, improperly guided individuals; it will not be through an altruistic turn in the minds or hearts of the promulgators of these institutions, and the sooner such information becomes available the sooner shall we have graduates from these schools coming out dissatisfied with their training and anxious for advanced work which we are not now able to give with the credit they desire, thus making it necessary for them to begin anew, sacrificing the time previously devoted, also discounting much already learned.